

THE GREEN HEART OF ITALY

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Umbria is called the green heart of Italy for good reason. One "Grand Tourist" wrote, "It is the most beautiful countryside in the world. I do not exaggerate." It is Italy's only region without a coastline or a shared border, nestled in the country's heart amidst imposing mountains, densely wooded hills and a few fertile valleys. It is a land of tradition, mystics and saints...truffles and chocolates!

What follows is a bit of a departure for *ARTEExpress*, usually focused on contemporary art and geared toward the very up-scale art traveler. I, on the other hand, went with part of my family on an Elderhostel trip to Umbria! (Unfortunate name, great organization!) Elderhostel (www.elderhostel.org) is America's first and the world's largest educational travel organization for adults 55 and over. It is a not-for-profit organization that provides exceptional learning adventures, at modest prices, through nearly 8,000 programs a year in more than ninety countries.

Gathering in Rome, we bused towards Assisi, beckoning in its sunset shades of pink tufa stone on **Monte Subasio** in the distance. We arrived at a propitious time, the day before the **Feast of St. Francis**. The next day, early on October 4, we gathered with the costumed, flag-waving throngs in the nearby **Piazza del Comune**, the center of Assisi. From here the colorful parade, representing different comuni (cities of Umbria) and regions of Italy, marched to **Basilica di San Francesco** to celebrate the Feast of St. Francis. The following day was the biggest market day of the year (very festive), and on October 7, was the **Marcia della Pace**, the annual **Peace March of Italy**, from Perugia to Assisi (20 kilometers), where 60,000 gathered in Assisi in solidarity for peace (lively, but a good time to avoid the basilica). That was lots of tradition in four days!

Perhaps the greatest attribute of Elderhostel in Italy is the education component, administered for 25 years by **Trinity College in Connecticut**. The art history and cultural history lectures are excellent, better than those provided on very expensive trips by my beloved university. Our site coordinator and main lecturer for Umbria was Marco Ceccarani who has a Doctorate in Humanities from Università di Perugia. He was born in Assisi. He oozes Umbria! His favorite expressions are "It's tradition!" and "Va bene?," which he adds at the end of many sentences to see if we are listening. Loosely translated, it means, "OK? It's good?"

Marco's detailed lectures prepared us for our visit to the Lower Church and the Upper Church of Assisi's **Basilica di San Francesco**, largely restored since the devastating 1997 earthquake. Fortunately, our group had one of the best art docents I have ever heard, **Fra Michael (Toczek)** from eastern Pennsylvania. This gentle Franciscan scholar conveyed St. Francis' humanity, spiritual beauty and love of nature through the works of unknown masters and the "super Tuscans," **Cimabue**, **Giotto** and **Simone Martini**. Dazzling works by **Pietro Lorenzetti** illuminated the Lower Church, as well. Basilica San Francesco is reputed to have the oldest stained-glass windows in Italy, probably designed by the 14th-century artist Simone Martini. (**Brother Michael** has been in Assisi one year and will remain two more years.

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If you are going to Assisi, seek him out as your guide (www.sanfrancescoassisi.org or, email: visite@sanfrancescoassisi.org).

Our four days in Assisi were filled with wonderful visits to other notable sites. **Cattedrale di San Rufino** (1140-1290), nearer the central part of town, has the finest Romanesque façade in Umbria, exquisite rose windows and robust medieval carvings of animals and saints. On the other hand, **Basilica di Santa Chiara (St. Clare)** was just steps from our hotel. The Basilica named for her was built in 1265 and is a striking pink and white striped beauty supported by flying buttresses. In the church is the famous **Crucifix of San Damiano**.

Another Franciscan retreat of meditation and prayer was **Eremo delle Carceri** (Hermitage of the Prisons), 4 kilometers from Assisi, on the edge of a ravine on **Monte Subasio**. Spectacular! Franciscan friars would go there “to lock themselves away” in prayer in the caves of the mountain.

Back in Assisi, our professor Marco lamented the loss of traditional crafts in Umbria. Paradoxically, it is universal education that has killed crafts but has given Italy the sixth largest economy in the world. St. Clare introduced embroidery to Assisi, and it is still the craft of the women today, albeit the older women. Another craft that is hanging on in a beautiful shop in Assisi is that of bookbinding. Students come here from America (Rhode Island School of Design) to learn the technique. **Erudi de Zubboli** sells beautiful books and note-papers bound in Assisi. It is located on the main square, **Piazza del Comune**, across from the 1st-century-A.D. Roman **Temple of Minerva**, (Santa Maria sopra Minerva). In the same piazza are two of Marco's favorite Assisi restaurants: **Ristorante La Taverna dei Consoli** and **La Forteza**, which is also a small hotel.

For music, we enjoyed a private polyphonic (close harmony) concert, a classical piano concert in a church, and a symphonic and choral performance at the Basilica di San Francesco.

Day trips from Assisi included one to **Santa Maria degli Angeli** in the valley below. The huge 16th-century basilica encompasses a tiny 11th-century Benedictine chapel, **Porziuncola** (Don't miss this painted jewel!).

For a pilgrimage of another sort, we went to the little hill town of **Deruta**, a center for ceramics since the 13th century. Three hundred families maintain this tradition. We visited octogenarian Francesco Sberna who turned his talent into an empire (**Sberna, Le Ceramiche di Deruta**, www.sberna.com). Francesco is famous for his ornamental skill as an artist and, although his company produces for the mass market (Starbucks, Williams Sonoma, Pier 1, etc.), he still creates his exquisite signed pieces. Luckily, Francesco was on site, painting a massive plate, with his cat, Gringo, curled up at his feet.

On to **Torgiano** and the **Fundazione Lungarotti's Museo del Vino** (www.lungarotti.it). What a treasure of a little museum, beautifully designed, impeccably installed in the cellars of the 17th-century Palazzo Baglioni. Not only does it illustrate the history of wine and its implements, but it has a beautiful display of antique Majolica. We tasted the magic of Lungarotti wines next door in the **Cantine**

Focus Umbria

MUSEUMS AND FOUNDATIONS IN DERUTA

Regional Museum of Deruta Ceramics, (Convent of San Francesco) Piazza dei Consoli, Deruta, Tel. 39-075-9711000. The best place to study ceramics (the collection includes some 8,000 pieces) before embarking on a shopping spree in Deruta.

IN PERUGIA

Galleria Nazionale dell'Umbria, Palazzo dei Priori, Corso Vannucci, Perugia, Tel. 39-075-5741410. Umbria's greatest collection of paintings—largely works by regional artists dating from the 13th-18th century, including Pintoricchio and Perugino. The highlights are altarpieces by Piero della Francesca and Fra Angelico.

Museo Archeologico Nazionale dell'Umbria, just off Corso Cavour, behind the Church of San Domenico, Perugia, Tel. 39-075-572-7141. Excellent material from prehistoric and Etruscan Perugia. The real jewel is the underground recreation of the Etruscan tomb of Cai Cuti, 3rd-1st century B.C.

Collegio del Cambio, Corso Vannucci 25, Perugia, Tel. 39-075-572-8599. Perugia's moneychangers' guild commissioned Perugino to decorate one of the finest Renaissance rooms in Italy.

IN SPOLETO

Galleria Civica d'Arte Moderna, Corso Mazzini, Vicolo III, Spoleto, Tel. 39-0743-222349. Works by Italy's top modern masters.

Fondazione Palazzo Albizzini (Collezione Burri), Via Palazzo, Albizzini—Albizinni 1, Citta di Castello, Perugia, Tel. 39-075-855-4649. A 15th-century palazzo which houses the 100 or so works given to the city by one of Italy's best known modern painters.

IN ORVIETO

Museo d'Arte Moderna “Emilio Greco,” Palazzo Soliano, Piazza Duomo, Orvieto, Tel. 39-0763-344605. This museum is devoted to the modern Sicilian sculptor who made the bronze doors of the Orvieto Duomo (1964-70).

HOTELS

IN ASSISI

Subasio, Via Frate Elia, 2, Assisi, Tel. 39-075-812740, Fax 39-075-816691. Assisi's oldest, most famous and finest hotel linked to the

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Focus Umbria

Basilica of St. Francis by a portico. Beautiful views over the valley below.

www.hotelsubasio.com

Fontebella, Via Fontebella 25, Assisi, Tel. 39-075-812883, Fax 39-075-812941. Located in a 17th-century palazzo, towards the Basilica end of town, with a lovely garden and more great views over the Santa Maria degli Angeli valley. www.fontebella.com

IN PERUGIA

Brufani Palace, Piazza Italia 12, Perugia, Tel. 39-075-5732541, Fax 39-075-5720210. Luxury 19th-century palace, with great location at the top of the escalators, near historical sites. Enchanting vistas of the Umbrian valley. Ask for a room with a view. www.brufanipalace.com.

Palazzo Terranova, Ronti, Morra, Perugia, Tel. 39-075-8570083, Fax 39-075-857-0014. Situated high in the Umbrian hills, this exquisitely restored palace, where each guest room is named after an opera or composer, is filled with charming family heirlooms and antiques.

Sangallo Palace, Via Masi 9, Perugia, Tel. 39-075-5730202, Fax 39-075-5730068. Very comfortable hotel, near the bottom of the escalators, with easy access to the historical centre. www.sangallo.com.

IN ORVIETO

Palazzo Piccolomini, Piazza dei Raniere 36, Orvieto, Tel. 39-0763-341743, Fax 39-0763-391046. This beautifully restored medieval palace is ideally located in the centre of Orvieto. www.hotelpiccolomini.it.

La Badia, Bagnoregio Road, Orvieto, Tel. 39-0763-90359, Fax 39-0763-92796. Set within an old abbey 5 kilometers south of town, with lovely views up to the tufa-crowned citadel of Orvieto. www.labadiahotel.it.

IN TORGIANO

Le Tre Vaselle, Via Giuseppe Garibaldi 39, Torgiano, Tel. 39-075-9880447, Fax 39-075-9880214. An ideal base for visiting Perugia, Deruta, and Assisi, this handsome villa is owned by the famous Lungarotti family and set in their vineyards with views over the valley. www.3vaselle.it.

IN SPOLETO

Hotel San Luca, Via Interna delle Mura, Spoleto, Tel. 39-0743-223399, Fax 39-0743-223800. Sophisticated 19th-century ambiance in the historic centre. www.hotelsanluca.com

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Lungarotti (open by appointment). Rubesco de Torgiano and Lungarotti Balsamic, aged 12 years, filled our totes. A meal or a stay at **Le Tre Vaselle**, a Lungarotti villa in Torgiano, would be a sublime treat.

Anne Robichaud, affectionately called "Anna the Americana," delivered a delightful lecture called "Memoirs of a Rural Life." She has lived in Italy since 1973, and from 1975 to 1983 worked the land with her husband Pino, a stonemason and restorer of medieval buildings. She spoke of an important concept in Umbrian life, "veglia," from the word "vigil," to watch. It's the time from late fall to May when planting and harvesting chores are done for the season and you sit in each other's kitchens and talk about family life and memories of the old days, repair tools and weave baskets. Veglia is the time during which the oral history gets passed on. It's tradition! Anne is available for tours in Umbria and beyond. See her great website at www.annesitaly.com.

Perugia, Umbria's capital (150,000), a bustling university town and one of Umbria's most interesting historic stops, is a hill town itself. Its verticality is augmented by a series of escalators that take you up through vaulted brick interiors, from the lower **Piazza dei Partigiani** to **Piazza Italia** of the old town. (Our hotel was the comfortable **Sangallo Palace** near the lower escalators: www.sangallo.it.) Four escalators take you to the top (where the luxury hotel **Hotel Brufani Palace**, www.brufanipalace.com, is conveniently located). Close-by is the remarkable **Galleria Nazionale dell' Umbria**, located in the huge Palazzo dei Priori, the town hall. The museum has the region's finest art: beautifully presented works by **Maestro di San Francesco** (the unknown painter before Giotto at the Basilica in Assisi), **Nicola and Giovanni Pisano, Duccio, Fra Angelico, Piero della Francesca** and of course, **Perugino**.

Adjacent to the museum is the **Collegio del Cambio**. Both the museum and the Collegio are located on the Corso Vannuccci, named after Pietro Vannucci, called **Perugino**. The Collegio del Cambio, the headquarters of Perugia's moneychangers' guild, commissioned the artist to decorate the chambers in an attempt to clean up the reputation of the guild. Christian, Classical and secular virtues were the themes, and planetary gods ruled the ceiling, which was inspired by grottoes and the newly discovered Nero's Golden House. I don't know if he accomplished the goal, but Perugino created one of the finest pure Renaissance rooms in all Italy. It is spectacular!

Don't miss Italy's most beautiful medieval fountain, **Fontana Maggiore** in the center of the **Piazza IV Novembre**, commissioned (1270s) to commemorate Perugia's first aqueduct since Roman times. On the same piazza, over-looking the fountain is the **Cathedral of San Lorenzo**, a bit of a stepchild in all this grandeur. However, the steps in front of its pink and white façade seem to be where all of Perugia gathers. **San Lorenzo** does have one other claim to fame, the wedding ring of the Virgin Mary! This relic is kept in 15 nested cases under 15 locks and comes out only on July 29-30. It was stolen from another town in the Middle Ages so that Perugia would have a relic to attract pilgrims, a big business...or so the story goes.

During our stay in Perugia (home of the Baci chocolate kiss) the

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famous **Eurochocolate Festival** took place. Hordes of chocolate lovers crowded the old city's hundreds of booths displaying and selling the chocolates of Italy. Marco's favorite Italian chocolate makers are **Caffarel**, **Streglio** and **Venchi**. Melt-in-your-mouth wonderful, especially Caffarel's "Gianduia."

Our guide for Perugia and environs was the excellent **Claudia Sanvico** (e-mail: sanvico@tiscali.it). I have new respect for the Etruscans, who imprinted Italy from 10,000 B.C. until they were absorbed by the Romans. Perugia has Etruscan walls, Etruscan ruins, and thousands of Etruscan sarcophagi, many of which we saw at the **Museo Archeologico Nazionale dell'Umbria**. See a few sarcophagi, but don't miss a fascinating new installation recreating the site of an Etruscan burial tomb, found intact (unheard of!) with 200 years of family burials. It is called **Etruscan Tomb of the Cai Cuti, 3rd-1st century B.C.**

A fifteen-minute walk down the street is a beautiful feast for the eyes, with a bonus: the Benedictine church of **San Pietro** with its adjacent **Orto Medievale**, a recreated medieval botanical garden. San Pietro was founded in the 10th century A.D. and it looks it; it retains substantial parts of its original structure. Inside, however, **San Pietro's** 16th-century interior has been called the most gloriously decorated church in Umbria! It seems that nearly every inch is covered with frescoes and canvases. It is a stunning experience. After we visited the adjacent garden, awash with herbs and plants of medieval times, we saw that through the gate and over the bridge was the **Giardino del Frontone**, the formal, gracious 18th-century garden that is the main venue of the **Umbria Jazz Festival**, held every July.

Speaking of famous festivals, we visited Spoleto, home of the venerable **Festival dei Due Mondi**, now called **Festival di Spoleto**, held in June and July. From the main **Piazza della Liberta** we saw the **Roman Theatre**, built in the 1st century A.D. and restored as a venue for music and dance. The Romans would be pleased. Nearby we visited the **Casa Romana**, supposedly the home of Emperor Vespasian's mother. The **Piazza del Duomo** and the façade of the Duomo are famous as backdrop to the Festival di Spoleto. The Cathedral has a colorful cycle of frescoes on the walls of the apse by **Filippo Lippi**, depicting the life of Mary. Filippo Lippi's sarcophagus is here, but his bones are missing. I don't have that explanation either! In the **Capella delle Reliquie** of interest, besides its lovely frescoes and painted panels, is the letter by St. Francis written to Fra Leone. It was especially meaningful, after being in Assisi, to see his hand. Another chapel has beautiful frescoes by **Pinturicchio** of the lives of St. John the Baptist and St. Stephen, as well as the Madonna and Child.

Although we were fascinated by the porchetta being sliced for lunch in the piazza we opted for sit-down. We first saw **porchetta** at the huge market in Assisi during the Feast of St. Francis. The innards of the pig's head and belly are washed, chopped and stuffed back into the boneless pig with onion, fennel, rosemary and garlic, which is then slow roasted on a spit. The whole pig is consumed, slice-by-slice, and then the head is given as a reward. They love it in central Italy —

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Dei Duchi, Viale Matteotti 4, Spoleto, Tel. 39-0743-44541, Fax 39-0743-44543. Contemporary hotel popular with visiting artists and performers. Faces the 1st-century Roman theatre. www.hoteldeiduchi.com.

RESTAURANTS

IN ASSISI

Ristorante San Francesco, Via S. Francesco 52, Assisi, Tel. 39-075-812329, Fax 39-075-8112329. The veranda here overlooks the façade of the basilica with its big rose window. Perfect for lunch after a rigorous visit to Basilica di San Francesco.

Taverna dei Consoli, Piazza del Comune, Assisi, Tel. 39-075-812516 (no fax). This is one of professor Marco's favorite restaurants in Assisi. He is a native, and loves the Umbrian food and the view from the terrace overlooking the piazza.

La Fortezza, just off the Piazza del Comune, Assisi, Tel. 39-075-812418, Fax 39-075-8198035. Another of professor Marco's favorites. Charming, intimate with a little outside terrace. La Fortezza is also a small hotel with seven rooms. www.lafortezza.com.

Galleria del Gusto, Corso Mazzini, 12, Assisi, Tel. 39-075-816105. In case you want to gather a picnic for a rustic lunch, this is your place, a charming little shop in the heart of Assisi, offering a wide selection of local foods, cheeses and wonderful wines. infor@galleriadelgusto.

IN ORVIETO

La Badia Ristorante, in Hotel La Badia, 5 kilometers from Orvieto, 39-0763-301959, Fax 39-0763-92796. The restaurant is as renowned and refined as its hotel, once a 13th-century monastery. The Orvieto Classico is from the owner's (Count Fiumi) vineyards.

L'Asino D'Oro, Vicolo del Popolo 9, Orvieto, Tel. 39-076-334-4406. Hidden in the medieval Centro Storico, this tiny restaurant is simple, but widely noted for the superb traditional Umbrian dishes offered by chef Lucio Sforza. Closed Monday/Tuesday and the third week of October, the last two weeks of November, and two weeks in January.

I Sette Consoli, Piazza Sant Angelo 1A, Orvieto, Tel. & Fax 39-0763-343911. Set in the sacristy of the old church of Sant' Angelo, you can enjoy great local ingredients creatively prepared and a great wine list, too.

Zeppelin, Via G. Garibaldi 28, Orvieto, Tel. & Fax 39-0763-341447. Enjoy a cool 1920s

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atmosphere and a long wooden bar in an equally long restaurant (hence, "Zeppelin"). You can savor Umbrian specialties and take a cooking course, too. www.ristorantezeppelin.it.

IN PERUGIA

Osteria del Bartolo, Via Bartolo 30, Perugia, Tel. & Fax 39-075-5731561. This very small restaurant is the best in town, but only has 12 tables! It is near the famous medieval Fontana Maggiore in the historic centre. osteriadelbartolo@perugiaonline.com. Reservations a must.

IN SPOLETO

Trattoria Pecchiarda, Vicolo San Giovanni 1, Spoleto, Tel. 39-0743-221009, Fax 39-0743-46319. The oldest trattoria in Spoleto; delicious dishes are prepared with olive oil from the owner Rivoli's farm. We dined under the pergola. info@pecchiarda.it.

IN CIVITELLA DEL LAGO

Vissani, Strada Statale 248, Civitella del Lago, Tel. 39-0744-950206. Highly recommended by contemporary collectors Marie and Arnold Forde; but you must have a reservation in advance! Gianfranco Vissani has been called Italy's most notorious chef. Here is where Umbrian peasant flavors and fresh local ingredients meet truffles and foie gras. info@Vissani.net.

CERAMICS

SBERNA Le Ceramiche di Deruta, Via Tiberina, 146, Deruta, Tel. 39-075-9710206, Fax 39-075-9710428. An old and wonderful ceramic factory in Deruta, making mass-market and fine, one-of-a-kind pieces. www.sberna.com

U. Grazia, Via Tiberina, 181, Deruta, Tel. 39-075-9710201, Fax 39-075-972018. Dr. Ubaldo Grazia brings contemporary artists, such as John Okulick and Carolyn Brady to his 500-year-old majolica studio to create unique and stunning pieces. He represents the 25th generation of his family to carry on his family's stewardship of this fine art form. Call ahead for a special tour.

Ceramiche Giacomini, Piazza Duomo, 34, Orvieto, Tel. 39-0763-343970, Fax 39-0763-391261. There are many ceramic shops in Orvieto, but this one was especially accommodating and cheerful. It is a long-time family business, this is their only shop and their factory is just down the hill. www.ceramichegiacomini@virgilio.it.

Umbria...more

it's tradition! Instead of porchetta (pronounced "por-ket-ta"), we opted for the historic **Trattoria Pecchiarda** (email: info@pecchiarda.it). We sat under the pergola and happily ate and drank all that was offered.

Another visit from our Perugia home was to **Gubbio**, a rugged but orderly, medieval stone town on Mount Ingino. We enjoyed spectacular views of the 1st-century **Roman Theatre** and the valley below from the **Piazza Grande**. On the piazza is the enormous 14th-century **Palazzo dei Consoli**, designed by the architect **Gattapone**, which houses the **Museo Civico** (www.comune.gubbio.pg.it) and art gallery, plus a loggia from which even better views of the countryside are seen.

It was time to move on to **Orvieto**, another hilltop wonder, built on former Etruscan and Roman towns on the tufa stone outcropping. Our little boutique hotel, Grand Hotel Italia (www.grandhotelitalia.it) was very well located and, except for breakfast, our meals were at **Zeppelin**, a restaurant close-by that also has the distinction of offering one day cooking classes, or cooking courses of one week, two weeks, four weeks; or a seasonal or medieval cooking course (www.ristorantezeppelin.it). The restaurant has intern students from the Culinary Institute of America and when I talked with Chef Lorenzo he was preparing to leave for New York to do a video series for students on Italian cuisine. We bought jars of Zeppelin's truffle sauce to take home.

Our first visit in Orvieto was to one of Marco's favorite old churches: the 1,000-year-old **San Giovenale** at the western-most edge of the plateau. The fresco fragments on the walls are from 1200 to 1300, three hundred and fifty years after the church was built. The Benedictine architecture is very simple, built in an age of great violence.

The **Duomo of Orvieto** is one of Italy's greatest cathedrals, a black and white, basalt and marble jewel of the middle ages, visible for miles around. It has a stunning Italian Gothic façade resembling a giant triptych. The windows of the Romanesque interior are of thin-cut alabaster. Perhaps they inspired Raphael Moneo to use the same in the Los Angeles Cathedral! The real treasure inside is the **Capella di San Brizio**, which contains one of the finest fresco cycles of the Renaissance, started by **Fra Angelico** and finished years later by **Luca Signorelli**. Make reservations as only 26 are admitted at a time (email: opsmon@tin.it).

Finally making our way towards Rome to our airport hotel, we stopped at **Civita di Bagnoregio**, another incredible Etruscan and medieval tufa outcropping. It lies adjacent to Bagnoregio, the newer town, and is accessible only by a narrow bridge. It was the birthplace of **St. Bonaventura** and now has only a few inhabitants. Presently, Americans and Europeans are buying up its real estate for summer retreats. The ultimate get-away!

Actually, all of Umbria is the ultimate get-away. It is steeped in beauty, spiritual and physical. It is the birthplace of the Italian language, polyphonic music and saints. It's a place of tradition and more tradition. Va bene? Come and see.

Joni Rehnberg

ART AROUND THE WORLD

News

With winter's slush and sleet, the snowbirds come to **Los Angeles** to kick off the 2008 art fair season. Beginning on January 23, with an opening-night gala from 6:00-7:00 PM, the **FADA Los Angeles Art Show** will run through January 27 at **Barker Hanger**, Santa Monica. Tickets to the gala are \$200 in advance from LACMA's Art Museum Council or \$250 at the door (323-857-6501). Lectures and panels will take place across the street at **Santa Monica Art Studios**. Lectures by **Gabe Weisberg** and **David Pagel** should draw crowds, as will the collectors' panels. This is the 13th FADA show, and this year it will be joined by the **IFPDA Print Fair**, now in its 23rd year. Look for **Bobbie Greenfield**, **Charles Cowles**, **Jonathan Novak**, **Gemini G.E.L.**, **Flowers**, **Nancy Hoffman**, **Gerald Peters**, **Tobey Moss**, and more at the Los Angeles Art Show.

If the FADA fair comes down on the classic side, the super-contempo crowd will be at **Art LA 2008**, January 25-27 at the Santa Monica Civic Auditorium (1855 Main Street). Thirty local dealers will exhibit alongside thirty guests from New York to Berlin and beyond. The L.A. crowd includes **Ace**, **Angles**, **China Art Objects**, **Regen Projects**, **Marc Selwyn** and **Suzanne Vielmetter** (whose new Berlin gallery is listed as well), while **Hotel** (London), **Haunch of Venison** (London/Zurich/Berlin), **Ben Kaufmann** (Berlin), **Michael Janssen** (Cologne/Berlin) and more, represent Europe. **Gavin Brown**, **Eleven Rivington**, **Anton Kern**, **Andrew Kreps**, **James Fuentes**, et al, will be in from New York. The Thursday, January 24, preview, 6:30-10:30PM, will benefit Hammer Projects (for tickets, call 310-443-7026).

The biggest L.A. February news is the projected opening of the **BCAM** (Broad Contemporary Art Museum) at **LACMA** on February 16. The first floor will be occupied by two monumental **Richard Serra** sculptures, *Sequence*, on loan from the artist, in the west gallery; and *Band*, from the LACMA collection, in the east gallery. *Sequence* alone is 67-feet long, 42-feet wide, almost 13-feet tall and weighs 2,200 tons! Installation is under way. The entire Renzo Piano LACMA project has been labeled "Transformation," and includes not only the BCAM, but a completely re-imagined campus. The new Piano building for the Broad Museum is, of course, the centerpiece of "Transformation, Phase I." The 60,000-square-foot exhibition space will showcase works by Serra, **Barbara Kruger**, **John Baldessari**, **Ed Ruscha**, **Cindy Sherman**, **Damien Hirst**, **Chris Burden**, and more, from the Broad Collections, LACMA, and other lenders.

In **Madrid**, accolades are pouring in for the new **Prado** — the great Villanueva building restored and expanded (237,000 square feet) by "starchitect" **Rafael Moneo**. New galleries, an auditorium, restaurants and a bookstore, plus the restored 17th-century cloister of the **Jerónimo Church** are the result of the \$210-million, decade-long project which, at last, provides an exquisite back-drop for the legends: **Titian**, **Velázquez**, **Rubens**, and **Goya**.... To double your Madrid pleasure, plan your Prado visit during the **ARCO 27th International Contemporary Art Fair**, February 13-18 at **Feria de Madrid**. The 13th and 14th are invitational days for VIPs and professionals, with the general public opening on Friday the 15th at noon. Invitational

Great Addresses

IN LOS ANGELES

Paperfish, 345 North Maple Drive, Tel. 310-858-6030. Joachim Splichal, who first, with the original Patina, and then the Pinot invasion, created a food empire, is going back to Beverly Hills and the redoubtable Maple Drive address for the first time since the closure of his not-so-happy Max au Triangle days. In another first, his restaurant at the historic spot will be a seafood destination. The long, curvaceous orange dining room is open for lunch; dinner will be added after the holidays.

Bastide, 8475 Melrose Place, Tel. 323-651-5950. Bastide is back in West Hollywood in its third incarnation. Chef Walter Manzke is turning out fine French food in an atmosphere of impeccable service, beautiful accoutrements, and a splendid wine cellar. The meals are *prix fixe* — either four courses at \$80 per person, or seven courses at \$100, plus wine pairings — not a casual evening out! The original Le Restaurant in this space was sublime; perhaps this Bastide can claim its title.

Moss, 8444 Melrose Avenue, Tel. 323-951-0697. Murray Moss has long reigned as America's contemporary design guru from his iconic shop in New York's SoHo. Now Angelenos don't have to cross the continent for their design fix. Moss Los Angeles opened on Melrose on August 3rd. In addition to all the desirables, there is an exhibition program. Try to go before the *Glitter & Smoke* installation ends — chandeliers from the Swarovski Crystal Palace collection.

Twentieth, 8057 Beverly Blvd., Tel. 323-904-1200. Just because Moss has arrived, don't forget Stefan Lawrence's 10,000-square-feet of new design on Beverly. There's lots of room for furniture, as well as objects.

Helios House, Olympic Blvd., at Robertson. Drive by to see Boston architect Nader Tehrani's green gas station — the first in the country. The glittering metal canopy is lined with triangles of recycled steel, plus motion sensor lights, solar panels, recycled glass embedded in concrete and farmed wood are all part of the scheme. And it's an eye dazzler!

Tracht, Renaissance Hotel, 111 East Ocean Blvd., Long Beach, Tel. 562-499-2533. Suzanne Tracht of L.A.'s **Jar** has opened an outpost in — guess where — Long Beach. The same absolutely spot-on comfort food (scrumptious pot roast) is served here in a space carved out of the lobby of the oddish, post-modern Renaissance Hotel. I would have wished this terrific restaurant a bit more accommodating space, but that said, you can't beat the iceberg wedge/blue cheese salad, followed by the signature braised pot roast/boned short ribs and heavenly chocolate pudding.

IN MADRID

La Broche, Calle Miguel Ángel Alonso Martínez 29, Tel. 34 91 399 3437. Madrid has become ground zero for young chefs following the path cut by Ferran Adria at the legendary El Bulli, and one of the best is Sergi Arola of La Broche. In fact, he worked in the kitchen at El Bulli. His La Broche is a Michelin two-star house; the cuisine is inventive, and naturally it's usually packed.

Hotel Hesperia, Paseo de la Castellana 57, Tel. 34 91 210 8800, hotel@hesperia-madrid.com. This particular Hesperia caught our eye because of the presence of the famed Santceloni — the restaurant on the premises. The hotel itself is well-located on the Paseo de la Castellana and is actually quite lovely. The lower level rooms are a bit small, but nothing a deluxe double won't fix. We love the

ART AROUND THE WORLD

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Salamanca neighborhood — calm and quiet — but unlike the Ritz or the Palace, you can't walk to your favorite museum.

Hotel Orfila, Calle Orfila 6, Tel. 34 91 702 7770, commercial@hotelorfila.com. A Relais & Châteaux property in an 1880s mansion near Colon Square, this fine boutique hotel opened in the late 90s. This is what you've been looking for if the Philippe Starck aesthetic isn't for you. The plush rooms are exquisitely tasteful.

IN NEW YORK

Waverly Inn, 16 Bank Street (West Village), Tel. for reservations: none. Remember when **Ma Maison** in L.A. didn't have a telephone (30 years ago!)? Well, **Vanity Fair's** Graydon Carter and his partners in this fair English gentlemen's club have apparently discovered this exclusive approach and it's working like a charm. The only trouble is, the madder it makes the walk-ups, the more everyone devoutly loves the place, its highly agreeable food, nice service, and cottage décor. You might be seated if you're prepared to wait, or befriend concierge Maria Trejo-McDonald at the **Four Seasons**; she sends a "page" down to make a reservation.

Lever House Restaurant, 390 Park Avenue, Tel. 212-888-2700. Forgive me, but I have a thing about dining in bona-fide landmarks; it thrills me to see them loved, cared for, and flourishing — and there is no better example than Lever House (and, of course, the **Four Seasons** across the street). In 2003, a year after the 50th anniversary of Gordon Bunshaft's magnificent seafoam green, all-glass building (the first) on Park Avenue, Lever House Restaurant, designed by megatalent Marc Newson (an Australian from Paris) debuted. The original Lever House had no restaurant other than an employees' café, so inserting this new treasure into the street level of an historic landmark was not an easy assignment. Newson's design — retro-airliner-moderne — tips its hat to Raymond Loewy's original interiors, not Bunshaft's classic Mies modernism, but it works. And so does Dan Silverman's terrific cuisine, complemented by Deborah Snyder's dreamy desserts. And hurrah! They are even adding the garden designed for Noguchi sculpture that never made it past the original plans.

Longchamp, 132 Spring Street, Tel. 212-343-7444. Get in line behind all the local architecture students to see this stunning boutique for the venerable French leather-goods company. The 1930s building has been re-imagined with a cascade of rippling steel ribbons descending from the center of the shop (all these tons of steel took six months for London's Heatherwick Studio to fabricate and install) into all sorts of useful (steps) and decorative forms. It's magical.

London NYC, 151 West 54th Street, Tel. 212-307-5000, Fax 212-765-6530. When this hotel opened in 2006, all anyone could talk about was the restaurant by holy terror Gordon Ramsey, the super-famous British chef. Although the restaurant has yet to become the hottest table in town, don't overlook the sterling qualities of the hotel itself: fabulous location; extremely generous all-suites rooms by David Collins; views of winter-white Central Park from the upper floors and elegant Waterworks marble baths. Perhaps you will enjoy a remarkable Ramsey dinner, too!

News...more

special events include **Club ARCO Breakfast** and private preview, 10:00 AM-noon, February 13; lunch hosted by **Amigos de ARCO**, 2:00 PM, and dinner courtesy of the Mayor of Madrid, also February 13. On February 14, **King Juan Carlos** and **Queen Sofia** will preside over the official opening at 12:30 PM (VIP and professional passes). The country being honored is **Brazil**, and the **ARCO/Brazil Party** at midnight on Friday, February 15 is also invitational. For more information, contact actividadesarco@ifema.es. If you tire of today's world, **Prado** director **Miguel Zugaza** would like to suggest a Goya day, visiting the great masterpieces at the **Real Academia de San Fernando de la Florida**. Book through **Made for Spain** (34-91-310-7070; www.madeforspain.com).

Is it possible that New York's **Whitney Biennial** is coming around once again? You bet — March 6-June 1. This year, curators **Henriette Huldish** and **Shamim Momin** (with advice from the museum's senior curator **Donna De Salvo**) have renounced trendy titles, returned to the focus on American art — especially that made in **New York** or Los Angeles (42 of 81 participants are based in New York; 24 in L.A.) — and weighted the show toward 30-somethings with a few unusual sprinklings like **Spike Lee**; a father of Photo-Realism, **Robert Bechtle**, based in San Francisco; **Mary Heilmann**, who has enjoyed long-delayed recognition this year; and **Neighborhood Public Radio** of Oakland. The usual suspects include **John Baldessari**, **Sherrie Levine**, **Louise Lawler**, **Karen Kilimnik**, and **Matt Mullican**, but they are few and far-between. For the first time, the museum is collaborating with the **Park Avenue Armory** and **Art Production Fund** (APF) to present performances, temporary installations, events, and public programs at the **Seventh Regiment Armory** March 6-23.

Meanwhile, from coast-to-coast, some things you simply won't want to miss: **Unmonumental: The Object in the 21st Century**, the opening effort at **New York's New Museum of Contemporary Art**, called a "nervy opening volley" by *The New York Times* and presented on the occasion of the opening of the museum's stunning new building (through March 23); the **Gilbert and George** retrospective at the **de Young Museum, San Francisco** (opens February 16); **Allan Kaprow — Art as Life** — at last a retrospective and, appropriately, it's being held at Los Angeles' MOCA (opens March 23); a conversation between Pulitzer Prize-winning writer/biologist **Natalie Angier**, author of the bestseller *Woman: An Intimate Biography* and actor, author, collector, photographer **Leonard Nimoy** (yes, the legendary star), whose book of photographs titled, **Full Body Project** is introduced by her foreword (Hammer Conversations, UCLA Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, Tuesday, January 29, 7:00 PM); the first U.S. showing of **William Kentridge's** exquisite tapestries at the **Philadelphia Museum of Art** (through April 16); and, for the luckiest travelers, **Velázquez's Fables**, an inaugural exhibit at the **Museo del Prado**, which brings together sublime works by **Velázquez**, **Titian**, **Caravaggio**, **El Greco**, **Ribera** and **Zurbarán**, including **The Rokeby Venus** from London — the very rarest of loans.

ART EXPRESS ART EXPRESS

Calendar

Through	Jan. 20	Deutsche Guggenheim, Berlin	<i>Jeff Wall: Exposure</i>
Through	Jan. 20	Tate Modern, London	<i>Louise Bourgeois</i>
Through	Jan. 21	National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC	<i>Edward Hopper</i>
Through	Jan. 27	Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo, Netherlands	<i>Van Gogh's Drawings Reconsidered</i>
Through	Jan. 27	Museo Picasso Málaga, Spain	<i>Picasso: Object and Image</i>
Through	Jan. 27	Fondation Cartier pour l'Art Contemporain, Paris	<i>Robert Adams: On the Edge</i>
Through	Jan. 27	Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebaek	<i>Lucian Freud</i>
Through	Feb. 3	Museo d'Arte Moderna, Bologna	<i>Step Two: Chodzko, Marisaldi, Perrone</i>
Through	Feb. 4	Musée du Louvre, Paris	<i>Anselm Kiefer at the Louvre</i>
Through	Feb. 10	Hammer Museum, Los Angeles	<i>Francis Alys: Politics of Rehearsal</i>
Through	Feb. 10	Whitney Museum of American Art, New York	<i>Weiner: As Far as the Eye Can See</i>
Through	Feb. 11	Hara Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo	<i>Pipilotti Rist: Karakara</i>
Through	Feb. 11	MOCA Geffen Contemporary, Los Angeles	<i>Murakami</i>
Through	Feb. 11	Centre Pompidou, Paris	<i>L'Atelier d'Alberto Giacometti</i>
Through	Feb. 24	SFMOMA, San Francisco	<i>Take Your Time: Olafur Eliasson</i>
Through	Feb. 24	SFMOMA, San Francisco	<i>Douglas Gordon</i>
Through	Feb. 24	Albright-Knox Museum, Buffalo, New York	<i>The Panza Collection</i>
Through	Feb. 24	Philadelphia Museum of Art	<i>Ellsworth Kelly</i>
Through	Feb. 24	Kunstmuseum, Basel	<i>Adreas Gursky</i>
Through	Feb. 24	Museo del Prado, Madrid	<i>Velasquez's Fables</i>
Through	Feb. 24	Scottish National Museum, Edinburgh	<i>Carol Rhodes</i>
Through	Feb. 24	Whitney Museum of American Art, New York	<i>Campbell: Following Room</i>
Through	Feb. 25	MOMA, New York	<i>Perspectives in Latin American Art</i>
Through	Feb. 28	Museo d'Arte Contemporanea, Rome	<i>Rising City: We Try to Build the Future</i>
Through	Mar. 2	Museum of Contemporary Art, North Miami	<i>Jorge Pardo: House</i>
Through	Mar. 2	Musée National August Rodin, Paris	<i>Rodin and Photography</i>
Through	Mar. 10	Museum of Modern Art, New York	<i>Lucian Freud: The Painter's Etching</i>
Through	Mar. 30	Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit, Michigan	<i>Mehretu Works from the D.I.A. Collection</i>
Through	Mar. 30	LACMA, Los Angeles	<i>So Cal: Art of the 1960s & 70s from the LACMA Collection</i>
Through	Apr. 6	New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York	<i>Unmonumental: Object in the 21st Cent.</i>
Through	Apr. 6	Hispanic Society of America, New York	<i>Francis Alys: Fabiola</i>
Through	Apr. 6	British Museum, London	<i>The First Emperor: China's Terracotta Army</i>
Through	Apr. 13	J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles	<i>The Goat's Dance: Photographs by Iturbide</i>
Through	Apr. 13	Nelson-Atkins Museum, Kansas City	<i>Tapping Currents: Contemporary African Art</i>
Through	Apr. 14	MOMA, New York	<i>Focus: Alexander Calder</i>
Through	Apr. 16	Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia	<i>William Kentridge: 10 Tapestries</i>
Through	Apr. 20	High Museum of Art, Atlanta	<i>Street Life: American Photos from the 1960s & 70s</i>
Through	June 16	Bowers Museum, Santa Ana	<i>Gems! Colors of Light And Stone: The Scott Collection</i>
Through	June 30	Berkeley Art Museum, Berkeley	<i>Joan Jonas: The Shape, Scent, & Feel of Things</i>
Through	July 20	Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona	<i>Kawaii! Japan Now</i>
Through	Sept. 14	OCMA, Newport Beach	<i>Art Since the 1960s</i>
Jan. 16 - 20			London Art Fair
Jan. 23 - 27			FADA Los Angeles Art Show, Los Angeles (Barker Hanger, Santa Monica)
Jan. 23 - 27			IFPDA Print Fair, Los Angeles
Jan. 24 - Apr. 27			Tate Modern, London <i>Juan Munoz: A Retrospective</i>
Jan. 25 - 27			Art LA 2008, Los Angeles (Santa Monica Civic Auditorium)
Jan. 26 - May 4			SFMOMA, San Francisco <i>An-my Lê: Small Wars</i>
Feb. 1 - May 5			Tate Modern, London <i>Niki de Saint Phalle</i>
Feb. 3 - May 11			OCMA, Newport Beach <i>Disorderly Conduct: Art in Tumultuous Times</i>
Feb. 5 - Apr. 27			Tate Modern, London <i>Peter Doig</i>
Feb. 13 - 18			ARCO 27th Annual International Contemporary Art Fair, Madrid (Feria de Madrid)
Feb. 16 - May 10			Art Institute of Chicago <i>Edward Hopper</i>
Feb. 20 - May 18			Philadelphia Museum of Art <i>Frida Kahlo</i>
Feb. 22 - May 31			Guggenheim Museum, New York <i>Cai Guo-Quang: I Want to Believe</i>
Feb. 23 - May 18			SFMOMA, San Francisco <i>Friedlander</i>
Feb. 27 - May 18			Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York <i>Gustave Courbet</i>
Mar. 1 - June 1			Art Institute of Chicago <i>Ed Ruscha & Photography</i>
Mar. 2 - May 12			MOMA, New York, <i>Color Chart: Reinventing Color 1950-Today</i>
Mar. 2 - June 8			Hammer Museum, Los Angeles <i>Walker: My Complement, My Enemy</i>
Mar. 23 - June 30			MOCA Geffen Contemporary, Los Angeles <i>Allan Kaprow: Art as Life</i>
Mar. 27 - 30			The Armory Show, New York
Apr. 6 - Sept. 1			LACMA, Los Angeles <i>Phantom Sightings: Art after the Chicano Movement</i>
Apr. 16 - 20			Art Cologne, Germany
Apr. 23 - 27			MACO, Mexico City

Travel Bookshelf: Umbria

Guides

Umbria: Eyewitness Travel Guides.
James Lasdun and Pia Davis. *Walking and Eating in Tuscany and Umbria.*
Umbria: The Heritage Guide, Touring Club of Italy.
Maria Laura Della Croce and Giulio Veggi. *Treasures of Umbria: Italian Regions. Insight Guide: Umbria.*
Authentic Umbria: Perugia, Assisi, Gubbio, Spoleto, Todi, Orvieto, Trasimonto Lake, Touring Club of Italy.
Karen Brown's Tuscany & Umbria 2007: Exceptional Places to Stay & Itineraries.
John Moretti. *Frommer's Florence, Tuscany & Umbria*, 2008.

Cuisine

Susanna Gelmetti and Robert Budwig. *Italian Country Cooking from Umbria & Apulia.*
Mary Ann Esposito. *Ciao Italia in Umbria: Recipes and Reflections from the Heart of Italy.*
Carla Bardi. *Flavors of Umbria*, July 1, 2008 (pre-order).

Art & Architecture

Anthony Osler McIntyre. *Medieval Tuscany and Umbria (Architectural Guides for Travelers).*
Joseph A. Crowe. *History of Painting in Italy, Umbria, Florence, Siena: From the Second to the Sixteenth Century.*
Keith Christiansen. *From Filippo Lippi to Piero della Francesca* (Metropolitan Museum of Art).
Florence, Tuscany & Umbria: The Complete Guide with the Best of the Art Treasures and Hill Towns (Fodor's).

The Saints

Jon M. Sweeney. *Light in the Dark Ages: The Friendship of Francis and Clare of Assisi*, 2007.

And...strictly for fun

Mysteries

Timothy Holme. *The Assisi Murders.*
Iain Pears. *Giotto's Hand.*